

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 052031
ORIGIN OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 /022 R

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DRAFTED BY:OES/OFA/FA:GCNELSON

APPROVED BY:OES/OFA/FA:GCNELSON

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P 010004Z MAR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 9081

UNCLAS E F T O STATE 052031

FOLLOWING REPEAT COMDT COGARD WASHDC DTG 270359Z FEB 78
ACTION SECSTATE INFO CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL, COMLANTREA COGARD NY,
NMCC WASHDC DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC, INS WASHDC, DEA WASHDC,
COMMCUSTOMS WASHDC, WHITE HOUSE, CCGDELEVEN LONG BEACH CA,
BOGOTA, BARRANQUILLA, NASSAU AND DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC
FEB 27.

QUOTE: UNCLAS E F T O FOUO COMDT COGARD WASHDC 270359Z FEB 78
CCGDELEVEN PASS TO EPIC

1. SITUATION. THE COAST GUARD CUTTER STEADFAST IS MAINTAINING OVERT
SURVEILLANCE OF SUBJECT VESSEL IN THE NORTHWEST PROVIDENCE CHANNEL
DUE WEST OF THE SOUTHERN TIP OF GREAT ABACO ISLAND. WHEN INITIALLY
SIGHTED BY STEADFAST, SUBJECT VESSEL WAS APPROXIMATELY FIVE
MILES OFF GREAT ABACO HEADED FOR SHORE. UPON BEING HAILED BY
STEADFAST, VESSEL GAVE NAME (UNDERSTOOD BY STEADFAST TO BE EITHER
CATALINA OR CAROLINA) AND HOMEPORT OF SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA, THEN
CHANGED TO COURSE WHICH WOULD HAVE TAKEN IT SOUTH OF GREAT ABACO.
SUBSEQUENTLY, VESSEL REVERSED COURSE AND HEADED WEST THROUGH
NORTHWEST PROVIDENCE CHANNEL. WHEN APPROACHED BY STEADFAST,
PERSONS ABOARD SUBJECT VESSEL MOVED TWO BALES OF THE TYPE USED TO
PACKAGE MARIJUANA FROM THE DECK TO BELOW. LATER, PERSONS ON
VESSEL BEGAN TO BURN PAPERS ABOARD VESSEL. SUBJ VESSEL HAS AT
ALL TIMES BEEN IN INTL WATERS.

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PAGE 02 STATE 052031

2. DESCRIPTION OF VESSEL. APPROX. 75 FEET COASTAL FREIGHTER,
DISPLAYING NO NAME OR HOMEPORT. FURTHER DESCRIPTION AND
INFORMATION WILL BE PASSED BY TELEPHONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
3. PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION. IF VESSEL'S CLAIM OF COLOMBIAN
NATIONALITY IS CONFIRMED, COAST GUARD PROPOSES THAT DEPT OF
STATE SEEK AUTHORIZATION FROM GOVT OF COLOMBIA FOR COAST GUARD
TO BOARD AND SEARCH VESSEL, AND IF CONTRABAND IS FOUND, TO SEIZE

VESSEL, BRING IT TO MIAMI AND HOLD FOR PROSECUTION. IF EVIDENCE SUPPORTS, PROSECUTION WOULD BE BY U.S. (THIS COURSE APPEARS UNLIKELY AT THIS TIME); OTHERWISE, PERSONS ON BOARD WOULD BE DEPORTED BY INS, AND VESSEL WOULD BE HELD FOR GOVT OF COLOMBIA. IF VESSEL IS NOT COLOMBIAN, COAST GUARD WILL TREAT IT AS STATELESS VESSEL. DEPT OF JUSTICE CONCURS WITH THIS PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION.

4. REQUEST YOU CHECK WITH GOVT OF COLOMBIA TO CONFIRM SUBJ VESSEL'S NATIONALITY. IF VESSEL IS COLOMBIAN, REQUEST YOU SEEK THAT GOVT'S AUTHORIZATION ASHNEEDED TO PROCEED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARA 3. ABOVE.

UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SURVEILLANCE, DRUG TRAFFIC, SHIP MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE052031
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: OES/OFA/FA:GCNELSON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780093-0676
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803119/aaaadxaa.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: eaafd1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3152539
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SURVEILLANCE M/V CATALINA OR CAROLINA
TAGS: EWWT, SNAR, US
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/eaafd1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014